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Development indicators

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report describes the results of an assessment conducted by the United Nations Statistics Division of countries' capacity to produce the Millennium Development Goals indicators. This analysis was conducted at the request of the Statistical Commission at its thirty-sixth session.[a] The Commission is invited to comment on the methodology and the results.

The report also contains a brief update on the ongoing work of the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Millennium Development Goals Indicators in 2005 in the following areas: compilation and analysis of the indicators; review of methodologies related to the agreed indicators; coordination of data collection at the global level; coordination and support to countries in the compilation and analysis of indicators at the national level; and preparation of analysis and reporting on progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. The Commission is invited to comment on progress made by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Millennium Development Goals indicators and on future directions of work.

[a] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2005, Supplement No. 4* (E/2005/24), chap. VI.A, para. 13 (f).

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Introduction

1. With the adoption of the United Nations Millennium Declaration[1] in 2000, a system of monitoring and reporting was developed to track progress made over time. The reporting system is based on a set of goals, targets and indicators, defined as the Millennium Development Goals framework.[2] The assessment of progress is based on aggregate figures and is used at the global level to inform and help focus the global discussion on the development goals.

2. The global monitoring is based on data series compiled by specialized international organizations responsible for the different areas covered by the Millennium Development Goals. The work is undertaken through the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Millennium Development Goals Indicators, coordinated by the United Nations Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat (see annex I for details). At the national level, the framework is adapted to national circumstances and policy priorities and is used to track progress made within the country. At present, out of 191 Member States, 149 countries have produced at least one national report, for a total of 176 reports, covering a wide range of indicators (see annex II for details). Out of the 43 countries yet to produce a report, 12 are developed countries and 31 are developing countries, of which as many as 19 are small island developing States.

3. Since the first annual report on progress achieved in respect of the Millennium Development Goals (A/57/270 and Corr.1) was submitted to the General Assembly in 2002 at its request, shortcomings in the available data have become a preoccupation of both the international statistical community and the international organizations mandated to provide the aggregate figures. The Statistical Commission, at its thirty-sixth session, in March 2005, requested that a report be prepared regularly on the ability of countries to produce individual indicators.[3] It also raised issues on how metadata should be presented to accompany the indicators.

4. The present report presents the analysis carried out by the United Nations Statistics Division of countries' capacity to produce Millennium Development Goals indicators on the basis of data available in its database as of November 2005.

I. Millennium Development Goals global reporting

5. Since 2001, the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Millennium Development Goals Indicators, composed of experts from international organizations and national statistical offices, has produced yearly the aggregate data and analysis on progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. These results appear in the Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly on the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, with a fuller version available on the Internet.

6. The United Nations Statistics Division maintains the website of the Inter-agency and Expert Group (http://millenniumindicators.un.org/unsd/mi/mi_goals.asp), which contains documents and reports of its regular meetings and background material and reports of its thematic subgroups. In addition, the Statistics Division maintains the Millennium Development Goals database — accessible on the Internet — containing the data used for the analysis on progress towards achieving

the Millennium Development Goals, including the aggregated data at the regional level and the country data series as provided by the international organizations.

7. The global monitoring is based on regional and subregional figures obtained generally through weighted averages of country data, using the population of reference as weights. In order for the data to be comparable and be aggregated to the regional and/or subregional level, the country data used are those available in international sources. For each indicator, the Executive Office of the Secretary-General has designated one or more organizations to be the data providers and lead the data and methodological developments.

8. In some cases, the designated organization is also the office responsible for gathering the data from national statistical systems through a regular mechanism of periodic data collection (usually questionnaires). This is the case for data collected by the International Labour Organization (ILO) from labour ministries and national statistical offices on labour-force indicators; administrative records and household survey data gathered by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics from ministries of education and national statistical offices; and administrative records gathered by the World Health Organization (WHO) from health ministries for some of the major diseases.

9. In other cases, the designated organizations compile data collected mainly through surveys sponsored and, in some cases, carried out by the international organization itself. This is the case for data compiled by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in collaboration with WHO, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the Population Division of the United Nations Secretariat for most of the health indicators, including child malnutrition and the under-five mortality rate.

10. In the global monitoring and reporting of progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, regional and subregional figures on the official indicators are supplemented by additional indicators (background indicators) and by greater in-depth analysis of some variables, across socio-economic groups, to help policymakers understand the links across the various areas covered by the goals and the underlying factors.

II. Assessment of country capacity

A. Methodology

11. For this analysis, the capacity of countries to collect data and produce Millennium Development Goals indicators was assessed by the Statistics Division through a two-step process. First, country data available to international organizations and contained in the Millennium Development Goals database maintained by the Statistics Division were reviewed. The data were those compiled by each of the specialized agencies, within their area of expertise, from data provided by national Governments to the international statistical system. In some cases, countries might have had more recent data that had not yet become available to the specialized agency in question. This means that although a country may have produced yearly data for an indicator, for various reasons the data was not reported to the responsible international organization. The given country will therefore be

regarded as having no data. In this case, the country was classified, in the first step of the review, as "lacking in capacity" for that specific indicator.

12. In the second phase, the results of the analysis described above were reviewed by national statistical offices through direct consultations in meetings and by sending a copy of the analysis to the statistical offices of the 191 United Nations Member States for their comments and corrections.[4] The results of the analysis were also reviewed by national statisticians in two main forums: the Inter-agency and Expert Group Meeting held in Rome on 26 and 27 October 2005, attended by 14 representatives of national statistical offices, and the meeting with all national statistical offices from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) region held in Cape Verde in December 2005. The results of the second phase will be summarized in a room document to be distributed at the thirty-seventh session of the Statistical Commission in March 2006.

13. The review of countries' coverage includes almost all Millennium Development Goals indicators. Table 1 describes the few exceptions and the reasons for their exclusion.

Table 1
Indicators not covered in the analysis

Indicator	*Reason for exclusion*
38. Proportion of total developed country imports (by value and excluding arms) from developing countries and least developed countries, admitted free of duty	No country-level data in the United Nations Statistics Division database
39. Average tariffs imposed by developed countries on agricultural products and textiles and clothing from developing countries	No country-level data in the United Nations Statistics Division database
42. Total number of countries that have reached their heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) decision points and number that have reached their HIPC completion points (cumulative)	There are no country-level data for this indicator. It measures the total number of countries that have reached HIPC decision/completion points in a cumulative manner
46. Proportion of population with access to affordable essential drugs on a sustainable basis	No country-level data in the United Nations Statistics Division database
26. Ratio of area protected to maintain biological diversity to surface area	No information on "nature/origin" of data source

14. The analysis is summarized in tables A, B and C which are available for public access from the Millennium Development Goals website mentioned in paragraph 6 above. Taken together, these three tables provide a picture of the countries' capacity

to supply data to international organizations for the Millennium Development Goals monitoring exercise. The "supply of data" is used as a "proxy" to assess the "capacity to produce" the indicators. The countries are shown in the rows of the tables while indicators are shown in the columns. The number or code in the cell (intersection of each row and column) of the tables represents the data availability and type of source of a given indicator in a given country.

15. Table A presents the number of "country data points" available in the United Nations Statistics Division database by country and indicator since 1990. Only data deriving from national sources are counted. If a given country presents a combination of country data and agency estimates for an indicator, only the country data are counted. If only one data point is available for a country/indicator and this is an estimate by the designated international agency, the number "0" is assigned to the country.

16. Table B presents the "nature/origin" of the data stored in the United Nations Statistics Division database. For each country and indicator, it shows the following codes:

- "C", which indicates that the figure available in the database is derived from national data/estimates
- "CM", which indicates that the available figure is derived from national data "adjusted or revised" by the designated international organization
- "E", which indicates that the available figure is estimated by the designated international organization
- ".", which indicates that no information is available
- "na", which indicates that the indicator is not relevant in a given country.

Countries presenting a combination of country data and organization estimates for an indicator are coded "CM". If only one data point is available for a country/indicator and this has been estimated by the organization, the country is coded "E".

17. Table C presents the latest available year for each country/indicator available in the United Nations Statistics Division database.

B. Accuracy and limitations of the analysis

18. It is important to note that for some indicators, data are derived from surveys sponsored and carried out by international organizations — such as the Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) and the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS). Countries relying only on these data sources to monitor Millennium Development Goals progress should not be regarded as having capacity when the degree of involvement of the national statistical system in the production of data is limited. However, although this distinction is crucial, at this first stage, the necessary information on the exact level of country involvement and ownership of such data was not available and the Friends of the Chair Group accepted the approximation of considering international surveys at the same level as any other national sources.

19. The Friends of the Chair Group had expressed the need for the analysis to distinguish between "data slightly modified" by the responsible organization from

"data subject to a more drastic revision". However, the Group agreed that, at this stage, the information available from the organizations did not allow for such a distinction. At the last meeting of the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Millennium Development Goals Indicators, all organizations agreed to provide the Statistics Division with detailed metadata according to a common framework. The framework had been developed by the Statistics Division and circulated for final approval to the organizations, all of which committed to providing the metadata on the indicators under their responsibility by 15 February 2006. A copy of the framework is attached for information (annex III).

20. The assessment of the availability of trend data is based on the assumption that "any" two points in time since 1990 are sufficient for a trend analysis. The analysis therefore does not provide an assessment of data availability around significant benchmark years (1990 and 2000 or latest available).

21. It is important to note that the information in table A needs to be interpreted carefully. In general, it is better to have more observations but whether indicators are measured (frequently) seems to depend on, to a large extent, their relevance to country circumstances (besides countries' capacity to measure these indicators). The World Bank has recently looked into the correlation between the number of observations, for each Millennium Development Goals indicator, and countries' income level (excluding indicators 33-43 in Goal 8) and found some interesting patterns. For example, the availability of indicators 4 and 5 (prevalence of children underweight under 5 years of age and proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption) decreases as countries move to a higher income level, while the availability of indicators 11 and 28 (b) (share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector and consumption of ozone-depleting chlorofluorocarbons) increases as countries move to a higher income level. This contrast seems to indicate that countries at different development stages measure different indicators because they focus on different development issues. Therefore, in determining countries' capacity to measure Millennium Development Goals indicators, policy relevance may need to be considered in conjunction with data availability.

C. Analysis of the results

22. When looking at the *distribution of countries by availability of data per indicator*, a first result to be noted is that a relatively large group of countries (40 countries) have at least two data points for only 20 indicators or less (out of 60 indicators). The largest group of countries (93) has at least two data points for 21-30 indicators. This means that 133 countries have at least two data points for only half of the indicators being monitored (see table 2 which summarizes country capacity to produce data for the Millennium Development Goals indicators).

Table 2
Distribution of countries and territories by number of indicators on which trend analysis is possible

Number of indicators with at least two data points	*Number of countries*	*Percentage of countries*
1-10	4	2
11-20	36	19
21-30	93	48
More than 30	58	30
Total countries	**191**	**100**

23. Moving to the analysis of the tables from the indicators perspective, a two-step process was undertaken:

(a) First, table A was analysed. Table A presents the number of data points produced by countries and available in the United Nations Statistics Division database by country and indicator since 1990 (see para. 15). Indicators were ranked on the basis of (i) country coverage (number of countries having at least a data point for each indicator) and (ii) countries' capacity to conduct trend analysis (number of countries with at least two data points since 1990 for each indicator) (see tables 3 and 4 below for the results). This exercise was useful to highlight indicators where most of the countries had capacity to produce the necessary data as well as more problematic indicators for which data were sporadic (only for few countries) or not consistently available over time (hence trend analysis could not be undertaken) (see paras. 24-26 for more details).

Table 3
Distribution of indicators by availability of country data points since 1990

	Number of indicators in the group	*Percentage of indicators*
Group 1: at least 2 data points (indicators based on at least 2 data points for 80-100 per cent of countries)	19	32
Group 2: only 1 data point (indicators based on 62-99 per cent of countries' data but for only one data point)	6	10
Group 3: at least 2 data points for a subgroup of countries only (indicators based on at least 2 data points for only 39-75 per cent of countries)	11	18
Group 4: missing values (only from 3-37 per cent of countries' data)	9	15
Group 5: mixture (indicators based on different levels of availability of country data points)	15	25
Total indicators	**60**	**100**

Table 4
Grouping of indicators according to availability of countries' and trend data

Percentage of countries with trend data (2 or more data points since 1990)	*Percentage of countries with "country" data*			
	3-38	*39-61*	*62-79*	*80-100*
80-100				34, 33b, 33a, 14, 13, 47a, 15, 48b, 47b, 12, 35, 25, 24a, 24b, 44, 23a, 41, 9a, 28b (group 1 = 19 indicators)
59-79			7b, 27, 5 (group 3 = 3 indicators)	6, 30a, 31a, 11, 30b, 31b, 9b (group 5 = 7 indicators)
21-58		40, 48a, 36, 45, 23c, 37, 10, 8 (group 3 = 8 indicators)	16, 9c, 19c, 19, 4, 2, 1, 7a (group 5 = 8 indicators)	
1-20	23b, 32, 19a, 19b, 22a, 22b, 20, 18, 28a (group 4 = 9 indicators)			
0 (1 data point only)			43, 17, 3, 29 (group 2 = 4 indicators)	21b, 21a (group 2 = 2 indicators)

Note: Distribution of countries according to their capacity to produce the necessary Millennium Development Goals data at least once since 1990.

(b) Second, table B was analysed. Table B presents the nature/source of data stored in the Millennium Development Goals indicators database maintained by the United Nations Statistics Division and its analysis identified indicators based mainly on country data (coded "C" and "CM" in the table) versus indicators based primarily on international organizations' estimates (coded "E" in the table) (see para. 16 above for more details).

24. The analysis of table A on the number of country data points available per indicator reveals the presence of several groups of indicators (see tables 3 and 4):

- Group 1 (19 indicators), which is characterized by indicators based on countries' data and for at least two data points since 1990 (from 80 to 100 per cent of countries have country data available)
- Group 2 (6 indicators), which consists of indicators with only one data point since 1990 for most countries. Trend analysis for this group of indicators will not be possible
- Group 3 (11 indicators), which is also characterized by indicators with a minimum of two data points since 1990, but only for a subgroup of countries (between 39 and 75 per cent of countries)

- Group 4 (9 indicators), which contains indicators with very few country data (from 3 to 37 per cent of countries with data)
- Group 5 (15 indicators), which encompasses the remaining indicators

More information on these groups and related indicators is available on the aforementioned Millennium Development Goals website for public access.

25. The analysis of table 4 helps identify areas where statistical capacity is more needed. For example, it is evident that the set of indicators in group 4, for which very few countries have data, are mainly *indicators on diseases*. However, a distinction needs to be made when looking at implications for statistical capacity-building. Some of these indicators are derived from regular data-collection programmes, such as the information on tuberculosis prevalence (23 (b)) and tuberculosis death rates (23 (c)) that are obtained from health information systems based on vital registration, while others are obtained from internationally sponsored household surveys. The second type of indicators includes, for instance, the behavioural indicators on HIV/AIDS.

26. At the other extreme of table 4, the indicators under group 1, for which most countries have data, are mainly characterized by: (a) indicators for Goal 8 such as official development assistance (ODA) tracked only from the donors' angle (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries); (b) indicators for Goal 8 obtained from line ministries producing official statistics like the indicator on telephone lines (47 (a) and (b)), and indicators on seats in national parliament held by women (12); (c) indicators for Goal 4: child and infant mortality and immunization against measles (13, 14, 15); (d) indicators to monitor coverage and success rate for DOTS (the internationally recommended tuberculosis control strategy of WHO), for which data are obtained through national/WHO health systems rather than through the national statistical office; and (e) indicators meant to be used mainly at the aggregate level such as those for Goal 7: forest; consumption of chlorofluorocarbons. Apart from the indicators for Goal 4 on child mortality which are based on "routine" data-collection initiatives and have been monitored for decades, all the other indicators in this group are obtained from administrative data sources that are not directly under the responsibility of national statistical offices. This highlights the importance of making a better use of administrative records in order to improve data availability for national statistical systems in general, including for the Millennium Development Goals monitoring needs.

27. As for the analysis of table B on the type of data sources that have generated country-level data stored in the United Nations Statistics Division database, it reveals the presence of five groups of indicators (see table 5). Fifteen indicators (corresponding to 25 per cent of the total list of Millennium Development Goals indicators) are mainly based on data produced by countries (more than 70 per cent of country data). Values for these indicators in the Millennium Development Goals database maintained by the United Nations Statistics Division should be identical to those available in countries' Millennium Development Goals databases. Eighteen indicators (corresponding to 30 per cent of the total) are mainly based on data produced by countries that are subsequently adjusted by the specialized organizations for international comparison purposes and to obtain regional estimates (from 63 to 100 per cent of data adjusted/revised by international organizations). Values for these indicators in national and international databases could differ.

Three indicators (corresponding to 5 per cent of the total) have a strong component of international organizations' estimates (between 76 and 87 per cent of estimates). This can be due to the lack of capacity in many countries to produce data for these indicators or to the lack of reporting mechanisms for data exchange from national to international statistical systems. More information on these groups of indicators is available on the Millennium Development Goals website for public access.

Table 5
Distribution of indicators by type of data source

	Number of indicators in group	*Percentage of indicators*
Group 1: countries' data ("C", indicators based on more than 70 per cent of country data)	15	25
Group 2: countries' data adjusted by international organization ("CM", indicators based on countries' data adjusted/revised by international organizations from 63 to 100 per cent of countries)	18	30
Group 3: organizations' estimates ("E", indicators based on organization estimates from 76 to 87 per cent of countries)	3	5
Group 4: missing values (".", indicators for which from 50 to 93 per cent of countries have no data)	12	20
Group 5: mixture (indicators based on a mixture of data sources)	12	20
Total indicators	**60**	**100**

III. Points for discussion

28. **The Statistical Commission is invited:**

(a) **To comment on the methodology used to assess country capacity to report on the Millennium Development Goals indicators;**

(b) **To provide guidance on which type of assessment would be most useful to the Commission for consideration at future sessions.**

Notes

[1] See General Assembly resolution 55/2.

[2] See the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration" (A/56/326) of 6 September 2001.

[3] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2005, Supplement No. 4* (E/2005/24), chap. VI.A, para. 13 (f).

[4] The analysis was sent to the directors of all national statistical offices on 3 November 2005.

Annex I

Inter-agency work on monitoring progress

I. Seventh meeting of the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Millennium Development Goals Indicators

1. The Inter-agency and Expert Group on Millennium Development Goals Indicators met twice in 2005. The seventh meeting of the Group was held in New York from 25 to 27 January 2005. Sixteen organizations and five regional commissions were represented. The National Statistical Offices of Mexico and China also attended.

2. Based on the inputs provided by the organizations, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat and the Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat published the *Millennium Development Goals Report 2005*.* The report was launched in June 2005 by the Secretary-General, and used to inform the political debate at the 2005 high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council in July and at the 2005 World Summit in September. Globally, 35,000 copies have been distributed and the report is currently being reprinted.

3. The United Nations Statistics Division also issued the Internet publication entitled "Progress towards the Millennium Development Goals 1990-2005", and prepared data and analysis to inform the 2005 report of the Secretary-General entitled "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" (A/59/2005 and Add.1-3). The Statistics Division has also continued to maintain the website and database on Millennium Development Goals (http://millenniumindicators.un.org).

II. Eighth Meeting of the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Millennium Development Goals Indicators

4. The eighth meeting of the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Millennium Development Goals Indicators was held in Rome on 24 and 25 October 2005 and was attended by 45 experts from 18 organizations and 4 regional commissions; and on 26 and 27 October and was attended by 17 representatives of national statistical offices from 14 countries, 45 experts from 18 organizations and 4 regional commissions, 2 representatives of donor organizations and a representative of the European Commission.

5. The first two-day part of the meeting:

- Reviewed the major outcomes of the 2005 World Summit
- Took note of the proposed revisions in the list of Millennium Development Goals Indicators presented by the chairs of the subgroups on poverty and hunger, employment, gender, slums, and health indicators

* United Nations publication, Sales No. E.05.I.16.

- Discussed plans and timeline for the final revision of the list of indicators to be used for the global/regional monitoring of progress achieved towards the Millennium Development Goals
- Agreed to establish three committees composed of selected members of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group to make proposals on: (a) the revision of the handbook on Millennium Development Goals Indicators, (b) the restructuring of the Millennium Development Goals global database and website and (c) the reporting outputs for 2006
- Discussed plans for the next meeting of the Inter-agency and Expert Group to be held tentatively in March 2006 with the main objectives of agreeing on the official Millennium Development Goals list of indicators for global/regional monitoring and of discussing countries' priorities in data collection and compilation related to Millennium Development Goals indicators

6. The second two-day part of the meeting, attended by the representatives of national statistical offices, focused more on countries' needs and perspectives. In particular, it was aimed at improving the understanding of countries' needs in building capacity for the production and analysis of Millennium Development Goals and development indicators; facilitating the coordination of technical assistance activities; and strengthening the link between global and national monitoring.

7. The second part of the meeting:

- Reviewed the major results of the analysis on countries' capacity to monitor Millennium Development Goals indicators undertaken by the United Nations Statistics Division, under the guidance of the Friends of the Chair Group, on the basis of international data series stored in the global Millennium Development Goals indicators database maintained by the Statistics Division
- Discussed ways to improve the analysis prepared by the United Nations Statistics Division and strengthen the interaction between the national and international statistical systems
- Took note of countries' experiences in building statistical capacity and in using statistics for advocacy and policymaking and monitoring, and of their recommendations in this area
- Took note of initiatives supported by international organizations to facilitate the strengthening of countries' statistical capacity
- Agreed on priorities in statistical capacity-building for the production and use of development indicators and on recommendations to improve the effective delivery of technical assistance and the coordination of support at the national and international levels

Actions undertaken to improve the international database and related metadata

8. The results of the analysis prepared by the United Nations Statistics Division of data availability in the Millennium Development Goals database were presented at the meeting. The Group discussed the concerns emerging from the analysis and the implications for data-collection modalities and estimation methods, as well as

for needs to strengthen statistical capacity at national level (the outcome and recommendations on statistical capacity-building are presented in detail in the report of the Secretary-General on statistical capacity-building (E/CN.3/2006/27).

9. In addition, in response to the concerns raised by the Friends of the Chair Group, a committee of international organizations and countries was established to provide advice and suggestions to the United Nations Statistics Division during its thorough revision and restructuring of the Millennium Development Goals database, its metadata and the overall Millennium Development Goals website.

I. Improving data reporting and metadata

10. The meeting of the Inter-agency and Expert Group addressed the following questions: (a) whether or not the exercise carried out by the United Nations Statistics Division adequately reflected the situation in countries; (b) ways to improve reporting mechanisms from countries to organizations; and (c) identification of problematic indicators/areas where statistical capacity-building was more urgently needed.

11. It was agreed that there were two main issues that needed to be addressed by the international data providers: the existence of discrepancies in data available at the national level versus data in international series; and differences between figures presented in international series and data available at the country level.

12. The first problem relates to the modalities used by international organizations to collect data from countries and also depends on the level of coordination of national statistical systems within the country. The second question is related to the way international organizations prepare their estimates and the modalities they use to consult with national statistical authorities on the verification of estimated figures. All partner agencies agreed they would provide a description of the mechanisms they had in place to gather data from countries, their methods to ensure comparability across countries and to fill in data gaps, and modalities of consultation with national statistical authorities. This will be the first step in a process designed to address the concerns raised, identify ways to improve data reporting from countries and reduce discrepancies between national and international sources.

13. Participants agreed that the tables presented in the United Nations Statistics Division analysis were a very useful basis for stimulating the dialogue between national statistical offices and international organizations on ways to improve the use of national official statistics in international sources and reduce discrepancies between data used and published at the national and international levels.

14. The main outcomes of the discussion comprised the following observations:

- Countries found the mechanism of reporting to international organizations not always effective and adequate
- Problems with reporting to international organizations were linked to the lack of coordination within countries among the various statistical organizations (administrative data from line ministries, national statistical offices, etc.)
- In some cases, international experts visited countries with the main intent of gathering data and no real commitment to providing technical assistance

- Indicators in countries often differed from what was available in international sources, because of different national policy priorities. One useful example was given: the use of an indicator on dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT) in South Africa rather than the one used in international monitoring on "insecticide-treated bed nets"

- For most of the Goals, more data are generally available at the national level and used in Millennium Development Goals country reports than those presented in the United Nations Statistics Division database

15. The meeting agreed on the following: (a) agencies needed to improve transparency on how they adjusted country data and why; (b) mechanisms of reporting from national statistical systems to international organizations needed to be improved which implied also improving coordination within national statistical systems; (c) the calculation of indicators at the national level should be driven by national policy priorities; and (d) there was still a need for further training of national statisticians on the production of the indicators.

16. In respect of the analysis prepared by the Statistics Division, the meeting agreed on the following: (a) the title of the tables/analysis should be changed, given that they did not entirely reflect countries' capacity but rather availability of country-level data in international sources/databases; (b) the degree of organizations' adjustments to the data classified with the code "CM" used in table II should be clarified ("CM" indicates country data adjusted by agency to allow international comparison); (d) the need for more accurate assessment of the quality of country data for Millennium Development Goals indicators; (e) a third table (table III) presenting the latest available year per country/indicator should be added; and (f) the code "na" (not applicable) should be further applied when appropriate. It was also recommended to present countries' feedback to the Statistics Division assessment on the basis of selected case studies showing possible discrepancies, in respect of countries' capacity, between the assessment done by the United Nations Statistics Division and those undertaken by the countries themselves. It was also noted that the information presented in the Statistics Division report on countries' capacity could be supplemented by the assessment of how indicators were presented and analysed in Millennium Development Goals national reports.

17. The Group also discussed ways to improve reporting modalities from the designated organizations to the United Nations Statistics Division, for the annual reporting and for the updating of the database maintained by the Statistics Division. The Group agreed that organizations would always provide the metadata along with the data series submitted for inclusion in the database. All organizations would provide the United Nations Statistics Division with the metadata according to an agreed framework.

2. Revision of the database and restructuring of the website

18. The meeting also reviewed shortcomings in the current structure and layout of the website and database and suggested possible improvements. The United Nations Statistics Division has already initiated the redesigning of the website and database and a prototype has been developed for review and suggestions by the Group committee for the revision of the database and website. A complete revision of the metadata presented in the database is ongoing.

Annex II

Preparation of Millennium Development Goals national reports

1. An essential component of the monitoring of the Millennium Development Goals is represented by the preparation of national reports. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is the lead agency in this work and has assisted country Governments and Millennium Development Goals United Nations country teams in the preparation and dissemination of their reports, through training and financial support.

2. The country reports are primarily oriented towards national advocacy and public dialogue on Millennium Development Goals. Millennium Development Goals national reports have now been produced in 149 countries for a total of 176 reports. Out of the 43 countries yet to produce a report, 12 are developed countries, and 31 are developing countries, of which as many as 19 are small island developing States. In most countries, the reports have been useful in raising awareness of the development goals and the commitments made by Governments with respect to the United Nations Millennium Declaration and have helped promote the production and use of statistics for policymaking and monitoring. Several countries have produced their second and third reports (Afghanistan, Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Cuba, Denmark, Djibouti, Egypt, the Gambia, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lithuania, Mauritius, Nepal, Panama, the Philippines, Senegal, the Syrian Arab Republic and Viet Nam). The quality of Millennium Development Goals reports is increasing, in terms of both process and product, as countries acquire more experience. In particular, the reports are increasingly presenting data disaggregated across geographical regions and by sex. UNDP has conducted a review of best practices in monitoring and reporting, compiled in the report entitled *MDG Monitoring and Reporting: A Review of Good Practices* (UNDP, August 2005). The report also includes a CD-ROM compiling all available Millennium Development Goals reports. Country reports are also available at the UNDP Internet site (http://www.undp.org/mdg/countryreports.html).

3. In addition to national reports, regional reports have been produced by several regional and subregional organizations: five in Latin America and the Caribbean, one in the Arab States, one in Africa, two in Asia and the Pacific, one in Central Europe and one by the European Union.

Annex III

Inter-agency and Expert Group on Millennium Development Goals Indicators committee for the revision of the Millennium Development Goals website and metadata maintained by the United Nations Statistics Division

1. As agreed at the eighth meeting of the Inter-agency and Expert Group in Rome, the United Nations Statistics Division, together with selected Group members, has been undertaking a major revision of its Millennium Development Goals website and database (mainly in the way data and metadata are collected, stored and presented by the Statistics Division).

Millennium Development Goals indicators website

2. On 15 November 2005, a new prototype for the Millennium Development Goals indicators website was posted in a password-protected website accessible by the members of the Committee. The new prototype represents a major shift in approach and style. As opposed to the current site (http://millenniumindicators.un.org/unsd/mi/mi_goals.asp), which is based on static subject domains, the new version is based on a dynamic chronological display of information known as the web log or "blog".

3. Instead of being composed of many individual pages connected by hyperlinks, the blog is composed of a few templates into which content is fed from a database. This application provides many advantages over traditional sites, including:

- Allowing for easy creation of new pages, since new information is entered into a simple form (usually with title, category, and the body of the article) and then submitted. A new article is then added to the home page, creating the new full-article page, and to the appropriate date- or category-based archive;
- Allowing for easy filtering of content for various presentations, such as by date, category, author or other attributes;
- Allowing the administrator (the case for most blog platforms) to invite and add other authors, whose permissions and access are easily managed.

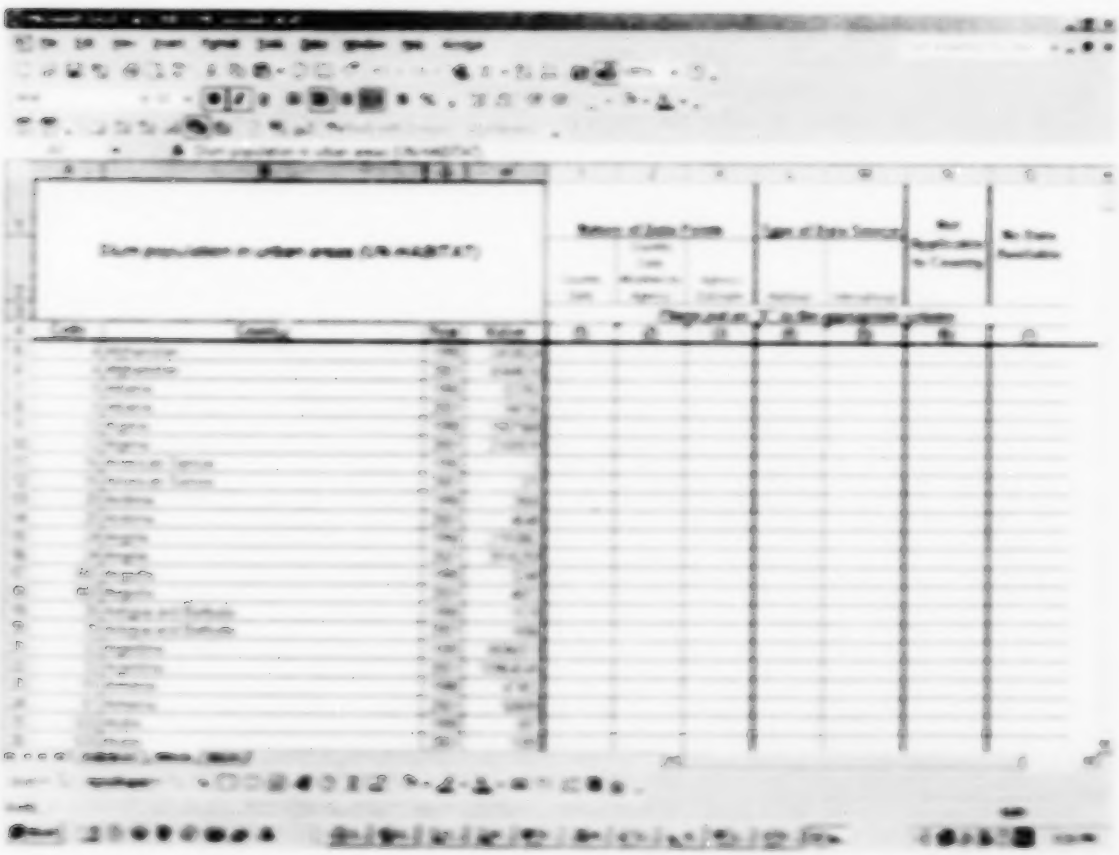
4. Another important feature of the new website will be the use of RSS feeds, which enable users to be immediately notified when new information is available on a website. A program known as a feed reader or aggregator can check RSS-enabled web pages on behalf of a user and display any updated articles that it finds. It is now common to find RSS feeds on many websites. Web-based feed readers and news aggregators require no software installation and make the user's "feeds" available on any computer with Web access.

Metadata structure

5. Currently the Millennium Development Goals database, as part of the United Nations Common Database, allows for storage only of data and footnotes. The only other metadata available are general in nature, such as an overall source for the whole indicator, and some broad definitions. This does not allow a separation of structural cell-level metadata from occasional footnotes, neither in terms of storage (through the United Nations Common Database) nor in terms of presentation (through the Millennium Development Goals website).

6. In order to accommodate users' requests for more extensive and structured metadata and as agreed by the Group in Rome, several changes will be implemented in the Millennium Development Goals database. A major improvement proposed is the use of a standard format to "receive" Millennium Development Goals data series from data providing organizations. To this end, a standard form for the reporting of data and metadata by designated organizations to the United Nations Statistics Division has been designed (see table below).

Standard form to be used by agencies when submitting new data and metadata



7. The left part of the form presents the data values ordered by country, indicator and year. The right part presents seven columns in which to indicate the "nature" of the data points and the "type" of data source.

8. The first three columns (1, 2 and 3) focus on the nature of the data/estimate stored in the United Nations Statistics Division database. A check mark will be placed in one of these columns as follows:

1. Country data: if the data/statistics have been collected/estimated by the country itself and simply reported by the specialized organization to the United Nations Statistics Division.

2. Country modified: if the data/statistics have been collected/estimated by the country but adjusted or modified in some way by the reporting organization.

3. Agency estimate: if the data are organizations' estimates with no direct national inputs.

9. The next two columns (4 and 5) are used to identify the type of data source used as either national or international. A check mark will be placed in one of these columns as follows:

1. National: the data source (survey, census, administrative records etc.) is nationally based and/or sponsored.

2. International: the data source is internationally based and/or sponsored.

10. The final two columns (6 and 7), will be used by the responsible organization when no data are available (check mark in column 7) or when the indicator is not relevant (check mark in column 6) in a given country, as follows:

1. Not applicable to country: the indicator does not apply to the particular country.

2. No data available: the indicator is applicable to the country but no data are available from either the country or the organization.

11. Designated organizations will be responsible for:

(a) Providing the requested metadata for existing data in the United Nations Statistics Division database by inserting an "X" in the appropriate columns in the form attached (each organization will receive a set of forms, one per indicator, containing an extraction of what is currently available in the Statistics Division database);

(b) Providing new data and related metadata by adding rows to countries where needed (for example, where new data points/years are available);

(c) Marking columns 6 and 7 to "identify" countries where the indicator is not relevant/applicable (column 6) and countries missing data (column 7);

12. In addition, data providers will prepare a methodological/technical note describing the calculation of each of the indicators under their responsibility, specifying: data sources, method of computation, assumptions and limitations of the estimates. This note on metadata will be posted in the Millennium Development Goals database, attached to the appropriate indicator, and will link to additional metadata available on the data provider's website.

Annex IV

Millennium Development Goals, targets and indicators

Goals and targets (from the Millennium Declaration)	*Indicators for monitoring progress*
Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	
Target 1: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day	1. Proportion of population below $1 purchasing power parity (PPP) per day[a] 2. Poverty gap ratio (incidence x depth of poverty) 3. Share of poorest quintile in national consumption
Target 2: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger	4. Prevalence of underweight children under five years of age 5. Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption
Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education	
Target 3: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling	6. Net enrolment ratio in primary education 7. Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach grade 5[b] 8. Literacy rate of 15-24-year-olds
Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women	
Target 4: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015	9. Ratios of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education 10. Ratio of literate women to men, 15-24 years old 11. Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector 12. Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament
Goal 4: Reduce child mortality	
Target 5: Reduce by two thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate	13. Under-five mortality rate 14. Infant mortality rate 15. Proportion of 1-year-old children immunized against measles
Goal 5: Improve maternal health	
Target 6: Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio	16. Maternal mortality ratio 17. Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel
Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases	
Target 7: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS	18. HIV prevalence among pregnant women aged 15-24 years 19. Condom use as a percentage of the contraceptive prevalence rate[c] 19a. Condom use at last high-risk sex

Goals and targets (from the Millennium Declaration)	Indicators for monitoring progress
	19b. Percentage of population aged 15-24 with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS[a]
	19c. Contraceptive prevalence rate
	20. Ratio of school attendance of orphans to school attendance of non-orphans aged 10-14
Target 8: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases	21. Prevalence and death rates associated with malaria
	22. Proportion of population in malaria-risk areas using effective malaria prevention and treatment measures[a]
	23. Prevalence and death rates associated with tuberculosis
	24. Proportion of tuberculosis cases detected and cured under directly observed treatment short course (DOTS) (internationally recommended tuberculosis control strategy)
Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability	
Target 9: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources	25. Proportion of land area covered by forest
	26. Ratio of area protected to maintain biological diversity to surface area
	27. Energy use (kilogram oil equivalent) per $1 gross domestic product (PPP)
	28. Carbon dioxide emissions per capita and consumption of ozone-depleting chlorofluorocarbons (ODP tons) and ozone-depleting potential (ODP) tons)
	29. Proportion of population using solid fuels
Target 10: Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation	30. Proportion of population with sustainable access to an improved water source, urban and rural
	31. Proportion of population with access to improved sanitation, urban and rural
Target 11: By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum-dwellers	32. Proportion of households with access to secure tenure
Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development	
Target 12: Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system Includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction, both nationally and internationally	Some of the indicators listed below are monitored separately for the least developed countries, Africa, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States Official development assistance (ODA)
	33. Net ODA, total and to the least developed countries, as percentage of Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) donors' gross national income
Target 13: Address the special needs of the least developed countries	

Goals and targets (from the Millennium Declaration)	Indicators for monitoring progress
Includes: tariff- and quota-free access for the least developed countries' exports; enhanced programme of debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) and cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous official development assistance (ODA) for countries committed to poverty reduction	34. Proportion of total bilateral, sector-allocable ODA of OECD/DAC donors to basic social services (basic education, primary health care, nutrition, safe water and sanitation)
	35. Proportion of bilateral official development assistance of OECD/DAC donors that is untied
	36. ODA received in landlocked developing countries as a proportion of their gross national incomes
Target 14: Address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and small island developing States (through the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the outcome of the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly)	37. ODA received in small island developing States as a proportion of their gross national incomes
	Market access
	38. Proportion of total developed-country imports (by value and excluding arms) from developing countries and least developed countries, admitted free of duty
	39. Average tariffs imposed by developed countries on agricultural products and textiles and clothing from developing countries
Target 15: Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term	40. Agricultural support estimate for OECD countries as a percentage of their gross domestic product
	41. Proportion of ODA provided to help build trade capacity
	Debt sustainability
	42. Total number of countries that have reached their HIPC decision points and number that have reached their HIPC completion points (cumulative)
	43. Debt relief committed under HIPC Initiative
	44. Debt service as a percentage of exports of goods and services
Target 16: In cooperation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth	45. Unemployment rate of young people aged 15-24, each sex and total[c]
Target 17: In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries	46. Proportion of population with access to affordable essential drugs on a sustainable basis
Target 18: In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications	47. Telephone lines and cellular subscribers per 100 population
	48. Personal computers in use per 100 population and Internet users per 100 population

Note: The Millennium Development Goals and targets come from the Millennium Declaration, signed by 189 countries, including 147 Heads of State and Governments, in September 2000 (http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.htm). The goals and targets are interrelated and should

be seen as a whole. They represent a partnership between the developed countries and the developing countries "to create an environment — at the national and global levels alike — that is conducive to development and the elimination of poverty". Goals, targets and indicators effective 8 September 2003.

[b] For monitoring country poverty trends, indicators based on national poverty lines should be used, where available.

[c] An alternative indicator under development is "primary completion rate".

[d] Among contraceptive methods, only condoms are effective in preventing HIV transmission. Since the condom use rate is measured only among women in union, it is supplemented by an indicator on condom use in high-risk situations (indicator 19a) and an indicator on HIV/AIDS knowledge (indicator 19b). Indicator 19c (contraceptive prevalence rate) is also useful in tracking progress achieving in other health, gender and poverty goals.

[e] This indicator is defined as the percentage of population aged 15-24 who correctly identify the two major ways of preventing the sexual transmission of HIV (using condoms and limiting sex to one faithful, uninfected partner), who reject the two most common local misconceptions about HIV transmission, and who know that a healthy-looking person can transmit HIV. However, since there are currently not a sufficient number of surveys to be able to calculate the indicator as defined above, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), in collaboration with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the World Health Organization (WHO), produced two proxy indicators that represent two components of the actual indicator. They are the following: (a) percentage of women and men aged 15-24 who know that a person can protect herself/himself from HIV infection by "consistent use of condoms"; (b) percentage of women and men 15-24 who know a healthy-looking person can transmit HIV.

[f] Prevention to be measured by the percentage of children under age 5 sleeping under insecticide-treated bed nets; treatment to be measured by percentage of children under age 5 who are appropriately treated.

[g] An improved measure of the target for future years is under development by the International Labour Organization.